



## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8, MONTANA OFFICE  
FEDERAL BUILDING, 10 West 15<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 3200  
HELENA, MONTANA 59626

Ref: 8MO

April 9, 2008

Craig Genzlinger, P.E.  
Project Manager  
Federal Highway Administration  
585 Shepard Way  
Helena, Montana 59601

Re: Final EIS for Miller Creek Road Project

Dear Mr. Genzlinger:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region VIII Montana Office has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Miller Creek Road Project in accordance with agency responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The EPA appreciates receipt of responses to our agency comments on the draft EIS. We support the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) selection of Alternative 5A, Miller Creek Road At-Grade Intersection, as the preferred alternative. We consider Alternative 5A to be the environmentally preferred alternative, since it avoids impacts to the Bitterroot River and adjacent riparian habitat; minimizes impacts to wetlands and floodplains; generates the lowest volume of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces; and has little or no effect to threatened and endangered species.

The FEIS indicates that Alternative 5A adequately accommodates and enhances mobility and safety for multiple transportation modes through 2025, and has the least impact to US 93 traffic volume and overall flow. Alternative 5A also can be implemented at an estimated cost of \$16.8 million while all the other build alternatives, that involve a new road and bridge over the Bitterroot River, would cost over \$48 million (i.e., from \$48.7 to \$50.7 million). The significantly lower cost of Alternative 5A may allow it to be implemented in a more timely manner to address existing high congestion levels and roadway deficiency and safety concerns in the area.

The EPA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment during the EIS process. If you have any questions please contact Mr. Steve Potts of my staff in Helena at 406-457-5022 or in Missoula at 406-329-3313. Thank you for considering our comments during the NEPA process.

Sincerely,

/s/ John F. Wardell  
Director  
Montana Office

cc: Larry Svoboda/Julia Johnson, EPA 8EPR-N, Denver